THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) As per the decision taken by the World Heritage Committee in 2000, one site per country is allowed for nomination every year. The Pre-historic site at Bhimbetka has been approved for nomination in 2002.

A proposal has been formulated to include more sites from India, including Hyderabad City in the revised tentative list for World Heritage Status. However, Golconda Fort already figures in the existing tentative list of UNESCO.

MoU with China to boost tourism industry

2143. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has signed an MoU with China to give boost to tourism industry, as reported in the Indian Express of 10th December, 2002;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether India has been accorded special status by China for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Department of Tourism of the Government of the Republic of India and the National Tourism Administration of the People's Republic of China on the Implementation Plan for organised group travel by Chinese citizens to India was signed in New Delhi on 8th December, 2002 in pursuance of the bilateral tourism cooperation agreement signed on 14th January, 2002 between the two countries. With the signing of this Memorandum of Understanding China has accorded 'Approved Destination Status' to India since China operates its outbound tourism through such a system only. This MoU will enable Chinese travel agencies to organise the outbound travel of groups of Chinese citizens to India and publicise such tour packages.